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### The Digital Divide in Sub-Saharan Africa

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# ELECTRICITY ACCESS AND GDP IN COMBATTING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

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## RESEARCH QUESTION

*What impact does electricity access have on a nation's GDP, and how can that be used to assess the existence of a digital divide?*



## ANTICIPATED FINDINGS & LIMITATIONS

I anticipate that analysis of the data will show a connection between access to electricity and GDP growth. Based on the general lack of access to ICTs in developing nations, and specifically in sub-Saharan Africa, I expect that regions with stronger access to electricity are more likely to be developed and thus have a higher GDP.

A limitation from this study is the small sample size of countries I intend to look at. Pulling data from only three countries leaves room for other confounding variables to skew data. Similarly, access to electricity is not the only factor influencing GDP growth, and it is essential to take into consideration geography, policy, and available resources also as affects to a nation's GDP.

## INTRODUCTION

The digital divide is known as the gap between those who are able to make effective use of technology and the Internet, and those who are not. Causes of the digital divide can be traced to economic instability, an urban and rural divide, and lack of infrastructure. Effects of the digital divide include increasing the urban and rural divide, lack of opportunity, and inability of economic growth. Reliable and steady access to electricity is necessary to the development of sub-Saharan Africa.

## HYPOTHESIS AND THEORY

### Hypothesis

I hypothesize that the amount of electricity available to a country has a positive effect on GDP. Thus exemplifying that electricity access is a component to bridging the digital divide.

### Theory

The literature addresses abundantly areas of infrastructure development such as telecommunications and Internet access, however there are gaps in research on the impact of electricity.



## METHODOLOGY AND DATA

•**PROPOSED METHOD:** I propose analyzing quantitative data sources to identify trends between amounts of electricity accesses and GDP growth among three sub-Saharan African countries. I will also use secondary qualitative data sources to supplement my findings.

•**INITIAL DATA:** I propose to pull primary data from the World Bank Data Bank, where an abundance of information on a variety of different variables and countries is available. Similarly, I will look at reports from the Africa Infrastructure Development Index (AIDI) for further information on electricity access.

## SELECTED REFERENCES

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